

Coins

Carson City dollars: All systems are go for final round of sales

By Roger Boye

THE LAST OF the government's Carson City silver dollars — nearly 55,000 coins with "rare dates" — will go on sale starting July 1 in a national mail auction.

Officials have yet to announce minimum price bids for the coins, but experts agree that the silver treasures will be expensive.

"I've seen our 'CC' dates advertised in trade publications for as much as \$200 each," said Roy Markon, an executive of the General Services Administration, a federal agency. "The GSA cannot sell government property for anything less than its fair market value."

Specifically, the final sale will include uncirculated coins minted in Carson City, Nev., in 1880, 1881, and 1885. Although total U.S. silver dollar production topped 84 million pieces on those three years, only 1.1 million of them carried the "CC" mint mark.

According to sale rules, collectors may bid on no more than five coins per date, and bids, together with full payment, must be received by the GSA between July 1 and 31. In August,

the GSA will rank the bids and award coins to highest bidders.

The mail auction contrasts with the February sale in which more than 900,000 Carson City dollars were sold at set prices ranging from \$45 to \$65. Most of those dollars were the "less rare" dates of 1883 and 1884.

Bidding forms will be available starting about June 15 from the Federal Information Center, 219 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, and they will be printed in paid advertisements scheduled to run in two hobby newspapers and the Wall Street Journal in early July. Collectors are asked not to write or call the GSA, which is still trying to process the more than 400,000 orders received in the February sale.

The remaining coins are the last of more than 2.9 million Carson City dollars discovered hidden in government vaults in the early 1960s. Nearly 2 million of the coins were sold for \$55 million in a series of sales conducted between 1972 and 1974.

The Carson City Mint produced coins from 1870 to 1893, using silver from the Comstock Lode and other historic Western mines.